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Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council

Thematic cluster III: United Nations offices, peacebuilding support offices, integrated offices and commissions

United Nations Mission in Colombia

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General (A/71/365/Add.7) on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council, which contains the proposed resource requirements for 2017 for the United Nations Mission in Colombia. During its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 7 December 2016.

2. The main report of the Secretary-General (A/71/365) provides an overview of the proposed resource requirements for 2017 for 31 special political missions and related cross-cutting issues. In the first five addenda to the main report, the specific requirements are covered for thematic clusters I to III and the two largest missions, namely, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) (A/71/365/Add.1-5). The budget proposals of the Secretary-General for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen and the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for Conflict Prevention, including on Burundi (both under cluster I), and

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the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (under cluster II) are presented in separate addenda. The comments and recommendations of the Advisory Committee that are of a cross-cutting nature and pertain to all special political missions, including the Committee's comments on the Kuwait Joint Support Office, are contained in the main report of the Committee (A/71/595). The comments and recommendations of the Committee regarding the budget proposals for thematic clusters I to III, UNAMA and UNAMI are presented in the related reports (A/71/595/Add.1-8).

3. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly approved a biennial provision of $1,124,400,000 net under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 for special political missions (see resolution 70/249 A). A summary of the provision for the biennium is provided in annex I to the main report of the Secretary-General (A/71/365). This biennial provision excludes the proposed resource requirements pertaining to the United Nations Mission in Colombia (the Mission).

II. Mandate and resource requirements for 2017

A. Background

4. By its resolution 2261 (2016), the Security Council established a political mission of unarmed international observers to be the international component and coordinator of the tripartite mechanism (the Mechanism) that would monitor and verify the agreement on a definitive bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo) (FARC-EP). The Council also mandated the mission to monitor and verify the laying down of arms. The mandate of 12 months established for the mission commenced following the signing of the peace agreement between the Government of Colombia and FARC-EP on 26 September 2016 (A/71/365/Add.7, para. 1).

5. It is indicated in the report that following the results of the plebiscite, held on 2 October 2016, whereby the peace agreement between the Government of Colombia and FARC-EP was rejected by the electorate, the parties signed a protocol for the bilateral and definitive ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, on 13 October 2016. In a letter dated 31 October 2016 (S/2016/923), the President of the Security Council authorized the Mission to commence monitoring and observation activities in accordance with the request of the parties (A/71/365/Add.7, paras. 8, 9 and 12).

6. In the report of the Secretary-General (A/71/365/Add.7 and Corr.1), it is stated that the Government of Colombia and the Mission would share the costs of activating and operating the Mechanism, exclusive of Government-provided security costs, in proportion to the number of national and international personnel in the Mechanism; and that current planning indicated that the Mission's usage of facilities and infrastructure would account for approximately 50 per cent of the total requirement (para. 16). It was also stated in the report that in its resolution 2307 (2016), the Security Council had authorized the Mission to share equally with the Government of Colombia the support required for the preparation and facilities

management of the transitional zones and transitional points for normalization (para. 16). **The Advisory Committee trusts that the next report of the Secretary-General will include more detailed information on the overall costs of the Mission, as well as the cost-sharing arrangements as related to its requirements.**

7. In the above-mentioned report of the Secretary-General, it is indicated that the basic tasks of the Mission would encompass: (a) organizing the operations of the Mechanism, taking into account the coordination of tasks, threat analysis and logistical requirements; (b) monitoring the local sites and visiting FARC-EP camps; (c) monitoring the security zones and visiting redeployed army units; and (d) visiting neighbouring population centres in order to interact with the local population and authorities (para. 10). It is also indicated that under the protocol adopted on 13 October 2016, monitoring and verification would be carried out primarily in the environs of between 50 and 60 temporary pre-grouping positions, rather than the 27 transitional zones and points for normalization identified in the peace agreement, entailing periodic visits by the Mechanism, at the local headquarters level, to the temporary pre-grouping positions (para. 11). It is stated in the report that the current proposal does not include provisions for the monitoring and verification of the laying down of arms by FARC-EP, to begin following the entry into force of the revised peace agreement, which was signed in Bogota on 24 November 2016 and, at the time of the issuance of the Secretary-General's report, was awaiting ratification by the Congress of Colombia (para. 2).[1]

8. According to the Secretary-General, the Mission and United Nations Headquarters are continuing to engage closely with the members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and other interested Member States on the nomination and deployment of observers (A/71/365/Add.7, para. 13); and the Mission continues to maintain very close contact with the United Nations country team (para. 14). It is also stated in the report that the Mission would engage regularly with national, regional and local authorities, actors and the wider public (para. 15).

9. It is stated in the report that since the deployment of an advance team to Bogota in February 2016 and the subsequent opening of the United Nations Mission in Colombia, the Mission has established its national headquarters, and six out of eight regional headquarters (A/71/365/Add.7, para. 17). It is also stated that reconnaissance visits have been undertaken, in a tripartite manner, to 24 of the 27 proposed local zones and points identified in the peace agreements and related protocols, as well as finalization and confirmation visits to the temporary team sites for the Mechanism (para. 18).

10. In paragraph 22 of the report, the phased approach adopted by the Mission and the Mechanism is described. In phase 1, those temporary pre-grouping points that are within daily commuting distance from one of the eight established regional headquarters for the Mission would be visited by tripartite observation teams; in phase 2, temporary team sites for the Mechanism would be progressively established in each of the 27 transitional zones and points for normalization; and in

[1] The peace agreement has since been ratified by the Congress of Colombia (on 30 November 2016).

phase 3, the construction and operation of fixed team sites for the Mechanism would be undertaken in all 27 zones and points.

B. Resource requirements

11. The proposed resource requirements for 2017 for the Mission amount to $64,167,300, net of staff assessment. The proposed resources would provide for 400 military observers ($11,138,700); 280 civilian personnel ($22,028,300); and operational costs ($31,000,300). It is stated in the report that the Mission would require 400 observers, with an additional 50 observers needed when the laying down of arms began (A/71/365/Add.7, paras. 24 and 34 and table 2).

Table 1
Financial resources
(Thousands of United States dollars)

	1 January-31 December 2016			Requirements for 1 January-31 December 2017				
	Appropriations	Estimated expenditure[a]	Variance	Appropriation 2016	Total requirements	Non-recurrent requirements	Variance (2017-2016)	Net requirements for 2017[b]
Category	(1)	(2)	(3)=(1)-(2)	(4)=(1)	(5)	(6)	(7)=(5)-(4)	(8)=(5)-(3)
Military observers	–	2 275.4	(2 275.4)	–	11 138.7	–	11 138.7	13 414.1
Civilian personnel costs	–	3 212.2	(3 212.2)	–	22 028.3	–	22 028.3	25 240.5
Operational costs	–	9 139.6	(9 139.6)	–	31 000.3	129.3	31 000.3	40 139.9
Total	**–**	**14 627.2**	**(14 627.2)**	**–**	**64 167.3**	**129.3**	**64 167.3**	**78 794.5**

[a] The amount of estimated expenditures corresponds to the amount of commitments approved to date, and the additional commitment authority, submitted for the approval of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.
[b] Net requirements after taking into account the estimated underexpenditure or overexpenditure for 2016.

12. With respect to funding for the 2016 period, it is indicated in paragraph 33 of the report that there was no appropriation for 2016, and that requirements are being met through commitment authorities, for which appropriation is being sought, in the context of the present report, in the amount of $14,627,200, comprising commitment authorities of $9,490,200 approved to date, and an amount of $5,137,000 submitted for the approval of the Advisory Committee on 21 November 2016. In this regard, the Committee recalls that the approved amount of $9,490,200 comprises $8,500,000 as approved by the Committee and $990,200 as approved by the Secretary-General under the terms of General Assembly resolution 70/250. With respect to the pending request for commitment authority in the amount of $5,137,000, the Committee approved commitments in the amount of $4,880,000. The total amount of commitments authorized for the 2016 period would therefore amount to $14,370,200 (see para. 29 (b) below).

I. Civilian personnel

13. The Secretary-General proposes the establishment of 280 positions (1 USG, 1 ASG, 1 D-2, 4 D-1, 20 P-5, 28 P-4, 36 P-3, 26 Field Service, 1 General Service (Other level), 47 National Professional Officers, 55 Local level and 60 United Nations Volunteers), comprising 184 for the substantive component, 38 for the security component and 58 for the mission support component (see table 2). The civilian personnel component would also include seven backstopping positions to be based at United Nations Headquarters (A/71/365/Add.7, para. 35).

Table 2
Positions

	Professional and higher categories								*General service and related categories*		*Total international*	*National staff*		*United Nations Volunteers*		*Grand total*
	USG	*ASG*	*D-2*	*D-1*	*P-5*	*P-4*	*P-3*	*Total*	*Field Service*	*General Service*		*National Professional Officer*	*Local level*	*International*	*National*	
Mission	1	1	1	4	19	25	34	**85**	26	–	**111**	47	55	57	3	273
Backstopping	–	–	–	–	1	3	2	**6**	–	1	**7**	–	–	–	–	7
Total	**1**	**1**	**1**	**4**	**20**	**28**	**36**	**91**	**26**	**1**	**118**	**47**	**55**	**57**	**3**	**280**

Backstopping positions

14. The Advisory Committee was provided with information showing that the proposed backstopping positions comprise two Political Affairs Officer (1 P-5 and 1 P-4) positions and 1 Administrative Assistant (General Service (Other level)) position in the Department of Political Affairs; 1 Military Planning Officer (P-4) position in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations; and 1 Planning and Programme Officer (P-3) position, 1 Human Resources Officer (P-4) position and 1 Logistics Officer (P-3) position in the Department of Field Support.

15. With respect to the three proposed positions in the Department of Political Affairs, the information provided to the Committee indicates that the incumbents would provide overall backstopping for the Mission, provide strategic, political and operational guidance and undertake day-to-day monitoring and troubleshooting; ensure information-sharing and consultation between the Mission and United Nations Headquarters; communicate regularly with the Member States that are contributing personnel to the Mission; lead the inter-agency task force on Colombia; and coordinate and manage projects and activities. **Taking into account the overall tasks of those occupying the three positions, the functions that could be performed by the proposed Political Affairs Officer (P-5) and the existing capacity within the Department of Political Affairs, the Advisory Committee recommends against approval of the proposed Political Affairs Officer (P-4) position. Any related non-post resources should be adjusted accordingly. The Committee recommends approval of the proposed Political Affairs Officer (P-5) position and the Administrative Assistant (General Service (Other level)) position.**

16. With regard to the three proposed backstopping positions in the Department of Field Service, the Advisory Committee was provided with information indicating that the three incumbents would be part of the Operational Support Team in the Department of Field Support which also provides support to the special political missions in Burundi, Libya, Syria and Yemen. According to the information provided, the proposed Planning and Programme Officer (P-3) would lead Department of Field Support engagement with respect to all strategic and critical operational support issues related to these special political missions; the proposed Human Resources Officer (P-4) would support the critical surge phase of the Mission by providing operational support, policy and guidance, oversight, workforce planning and strategic advisory services; and the proposed Logistics Officer (P-3) would draft and provide input to Colombia-related planning documents, including the mission support concept, the mission support plan and acquisition projections.

17. The Advisory Committee notes that those occupying the proposed backstopping positions in the Department of Field Support would be part of a team providing support to the special political missions in Burundi, Libya, Syria and Yemen as well. In this context, the Committee recalls that in its report on the estimates in respect of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, it recommended against approval of the proposed Logistics Officer (P-3) position in the Department of Field Support (A/71/595/Add.3, para. 44). The Committee also recalls that in its report on the estimates in respect of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, it recommended against approval of the proposed Human Resources Officer (P-4) and Planning Officer (P-3) positions in the Department of Field Support (A/71/595/Add.1, paras. 21 and 22). The Committee further recalls that in its report on the estimates in respect of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, it recommended against approval of the proposed Human Resources Officer (P-4) position, while recommending approval of the Acquisition Planning and Logistics Officer (P-3) position in the Department of Field Support (A/71/595/Add.6, para. 23). In its main report (A/71/595, para. 51), the Committee makes comments and recommendations on the fragmented presentation of information on backstopping support to special political missions at Headquarters.

18. **Having considered the proposed functions of the three backstopping positions in the Department of Field Support, the Advisory Committee notes that the incumbents of the proposed Human Resources Officer (P-4) and Logistics Officer (P-3) positions would support the initial planning and recruitment phase of the Mission, while the Planning and Programme Officer (P-3) would provide strategic support to the special political missions covered by the Operational Support Team. Taking into account the proposed functions under the three positions, and the Committee's previous recommendations on backstopping positions for the special political missions in Libya, Syria and Yemen, the Committee recommends against approval of the proposed Planning and Programme Officer (P-3) (position). Any related non-post resources should be adjusted accordingly. The Committee recommends approval of the proposed Human Resources Officer (P-4) and Logistics Officer (P-3) positions.**

Substantive support and coordination

19. From information provided to it, the Advisory Committee notes that three Administrative Assistants are proposed within the substantive support and coordination component to provide administrative and logistical support to the Office of the Principal Coordination Officer, including through arranging meetings, requesting travel, arranging schedules, filing and records management. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the Administrative Assistants would provide administrative support for the senior Mission staff member or team concerned. According to the organizational chart of the substantive support and coordination component, the Office of the Principal Coordination Officer would comprise the Principal Coordination Officer (D-1), 1 Special Assistant (National Professional Officer) and the 3 Administrative Assistants (Local level). **The Advisory Committee is not convinced that three Administrative Assistants are required to support the Office of the Principal Coordination Officer. The Committee therefore recommends against approval of two of the proposed Administrative Assistant (Local level) positions. Any related non-post resources should be adjusted accordingly.**

20. **Subject to its comments and recommendations as set out above, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's proposals regarding civilian personnel.**

2. Operational costs

21. The proposed resource requirements for operational costs amount to $31,000,300, comprising costs for consultants ($115,100), official travel ($1,608,400), facilities and infrastructure ($12,637,900), ground transportation ($2,862,000), air transportation ($5,169,400), communications ($6,138,900), information technology ($2,041,800), medical ($222,000) and other supplies, services and equipment ($204,800) (A/71/365/Add.7 and Corr.1, para. 34).

Consultants

22. The Advisory Committee was provided with information indicating that the proposed resources of $115,100 under consultants would provide for five consultants with expertise in Afro-Colombian issues; conflict-related indigenous issues; the difficulties that might be faced by the fighters; engagement with female fighters; and psychosocial transregional engagement; as well as two additional training consultants to provide an analysis of the history and nature of the conflict for use in induction briefings of new staff and observers. The Committee notes from information provided to it that the incumbent of a proposed Programme Officer (Ethnic and Indigenous Communities) position (P-4) in the Office of the Chief of Staff would analyse and monitor the needs and requirements of the indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. Upon enquiry, the Committee was provided with a breakdown of the proposed resources under consultants, including the amounts of $26,850 for the consultants on Afro-Colombian issues and $7,670 for the two training consultants on the history of the conflict and background on FARC-EP.

23. **The Advisory Committee considers that some of the proposed consultancies could be covered by utilizing in-house capacity. The Committee**

therefore recommends a 10 per cent reduction in the amount of $11,500 in the proposed resources for consultants.

Official travel

24. From information provided to it, the Advisory Committee notes that the proposed resources under official travel, in the amount of $1,608,400, would provide for official travel of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his staff for consultations and dialogue-focused meetings in various locations, including political consultations in Havana, New York, and Norway. Upon enquiry, the Committee was provided with a breakdown of the cost of proposed trips to be taken, including two familiarity trips by one Medical Officer (National Professional Officer) and one Engineering Officer (National Professional Officer) amounting to $9,373, and a trip for information management training to be taken by the substantive component amounting to $9,952. The Committee also notes that the breakdown does not provide information on the number of travellers per trip, together with relevant justifications for each trip. **The Advisory Committee is not convinced that all of the proposed trips under official travel are justified, and therefore recommends a 10 per cent reduction, in the amount of $160,800.**

Facilities and infrastructure

25. With respect to the proposed resources under facilities and infrastructure ($12,637,900) to provide for the Mission's 50 per cent share of the costs, information provided to the Advisory Committee indicates that those resources would provide for rental of premises ($2,047,600), rental of office equipment ($86,800), utilities and waste disposal services ($329,100), maintenance services ($5,592,700), security services ($636,200), architectural and demolition services ($3,889,200), stationery and office supplies ($43,800) and sanitation and cleaning materials ($12,500). Upon enquiry regarding the environmental impact of construction projects at the Mission, the Committee was informed that the Mechanism's temporary local headquarters have provisions for wastewater treatment and disposal, while with regard to the more permanent headquarters, planning is ongoing for the assessment of water resources, ground protection for generators, separation of wastewater and its treatment, and solid waste disposal. **The Advisory Committee trusts that information in this regard will be provided in the next report of the Secretary-General.**

Ground transportation

26. Information provided to the Advisory Committee indicates that resources amounting to $2,862,000 are proposed under ground transportation to provide for the Mission's 50 per cent share of the Mechanism costs related to the rental of armoured vehicles. **Taking into account the amount proposed for the rental of armoured vehicles, the Advisory Committee considers that the Secretary-General should undertake a comparison of the cost of the purchase of such vehicles with the cost of rental, to determine the more cost-effective option.**

27. **In this context, the Advisory Committee recalls that it had recommended in its previous report on special political missions that the Secretary-General develop a policy with respect to vehicle holdings by all special political missions**

at all duty stations, taking into consideration the mandate, size and operational requirements of individual missions, and indicate the applicability of such a policy to each special political mission (A/70/7/Add.10, para. 25).

28. **Subject to its comments and recommendations as set out above, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's proposals for operational costs.**

III. Conclusion

29. The proposed actions requested of the General Assembly by the Secretary-General in connection with the United Nations Mission in Colombia are set out in paragraph 37 of his report (A/71/365/Add.7). **Subject to its comments and recommendations above, as well as the comments and recommendations contained in its main report on special political missions (A/71/595), the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the Secretary-General's proposal for the resource requirements for 2017 for the United Nations Mission in Colombia. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly:**

(a) **Approve the budget for the United Nations Mission in Colombia for 2017 amounting to $63,591,900, net of staff assessment;**

(b) **Appropriate, under the procedures provided for in paragraph 11 of annex I to resolution 41/213, an additional amount of $77,962,100, net of staff assessment, under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, after taking into account the approved commitment authorities for 2016, amounting to $14,370,200;**

(c) **Appropriate an amount of $3,044,300 under section 36, Staff assessment, to be offset by a corresponding amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.**